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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2018

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SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL DISCUSSES EFFORTS TO ARRANGE LIVNI  
VISIT TO MOROCCO, RELATIONS WITH RABAT AND TUNIS

Classified By: A/DCM Marc J. Sievers for reasons 1.4 (B/D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Eynat Schlein-Michael, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Director of Maghreb, Syria, and Lebanon Affairs met with Poloff on December 10. She confirmed recent Israeli press reports of a possible upcoming visit to Morocco by Foreign Minister Livni, but was pessimistic the visit would take place. Schlein-Michael characterized Morocco as unwilling to take concrete steps to move relations forward with Israel. She briefly outlined Israeli-Tunisian ties, explaining that they were developing more slowly than those with Morocco. End Summary.

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MOROCCO UNWILLING TO COMMIT TO LIVNI VISIT  
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¶2. (C) Schlein-Michael confirmed that MFA Director General Aharon Abramovitch and Deputy Director General Yaakov Hadas were in Morocco last month to participate in a conference on European-Mediterranean cooperation and lay the groundwork for a possible Livni visit. She said that a visit, which the Israelis have pushed for "for some time," could happen in January but she was not optimistic because the Moroccans were unwilling to make a commitment. Schlein-Michael hoped that an editorial in Egypt's semi-official Al-Ahram newspaper on December 9, which saluted Morocco for holding the meeting with the Israelis and said it was time to develop such contacts, would provide some political cover for Rabat to expand overt ties to Israel. She added, however, that the Israeli delegation left Morocco irritated because Moroccan officials had planned to present an award to Hadas but changed their minds during the ceremony, apparently concerned that there would be a negative public reaction if news of the award leaked.

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RABAT FAILING TO DELIVER ON PROMISES  
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¶3. (C) Schlein-Michael explained that, as a general rule, Moroccan officials promise to move forward and "do things" but they never follow through. Instead, they meet with Israelis, say very positive things without making any commitments, and then ask the Israelis to assist them with their own diplomatic issues (e.g. western Sahara). While a senior advisor to King Mohammed VI was in Israel several weeks ago, the visit was not made public. Schlein-Michael said that Moroccan officials refuse Israeli offers to visit openly, even if only to travel to the Palestinian territories, for fear of political backlash if the visit is perceived as benefiting Israel.

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PROGRESS IN RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA EVEN SLOWER  
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¶4. (C) Schlein-Michael briefly discussed Israeli ties with Tunisia, explaining that Israeli and Tunisian ministers meet occasionally and that the Tunisian Ambassador to the

Palestinian Authority sometimes works with Israeli officials.

She added that otherwise relations with Morocco were "far better" than those with Tunisia.

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